LOADING AND SHOOTING INSTRUCTIONS

FOR 1859 & 1863 SHARPS RIFLES

WARNING: BEFORE PROCEEDING ALWAYS MAKE SURE THE FIREARM IS UNLOADED AND POINTED IN A SAFE DIRECTION.

FIELD STRIPPING

1) With the action (part. # 37) **OPEN,** place the hammer (part. # 4) in the half-cock position. You will notice a tiny plunger pin (part. # 49) located on the right side of the frame.

2) The lever hinge pin (part. # 48) is located on the lower front of the frame on the right-hand side of the rifle. While pushing in on the tiny plunger pin, rotate the arm of the lever hinge pin forward past the plunger pin, approximately 180 degrees from its original position. Turn the rifle upside down. While rotating forward and backward a few degrees, and pulling outward, remove the lever hinge pin. After the lever hinge pin has been removed, slide the lever and the breech block up and out of the rifle. To avoid that the hinge pin bumps against the forend (part. # 31), we suggest you disassemble the wood, loosening the screw (part. # 62) or remove the barrel's bands.

3) You have now field stripped the rifle.

4) Reverse the above procedure for reassembly.

Further disassemby should be attempted only by a competent gunsmith

CLEANING

1) Remove block (part. # 37), see "FIELD STRIPPING".

2) After the day's shooting, the sleeve (part. # 18) will need to be mooved slightly into the chamber by using an appropriate tool (item USA 500). This is very important. If the sleeve is not cleaned and greased on a regular basis, due to carbon residues it will become fouled, stick, and no longer set back against the breech face and seal the breech to stop the gas from leaking.

Gas leaking around the gas check can do two things:
- it can possibly injure the shooter;
- it will gas cut the breech face and compound the problem.

3) Periodically we suggest to remove the gas seal plate (part. # 38) to clean it properly from the powder residue. To remove it, use one simple screw driver working on the side of it. Clean it with a good solvent (item USA 487) and put it back in place, pushing it with a certain pressure.

4) Use a good bore solvent to clean the bore and breech (item USA 487).

5) Oil the bore and breech with a good grade of oil (item USA 489).

6) Put a thin coat of grease on the gas check and make it rotate and slide it back into the breech.

7) Replace the block.

The seal plate has been covered with a particular product, which helps to resist the high temperature produced by the black powder combustion inside the chamber and thus reducing the "ring" appearance on the plate. The use of a loaded brass case will also reduce such high temperature developed in the area.

Attention: the gas check cannot be removed completly.

CAUTION

- We strongly recommend you point the muzzle downrange in a safe direction **BEFORE** attempting to load and fire the rifle.
- To place the rifle on safe, slowly drop the hammer in the half-cock position. We strongly recommend not loading the rifle until you are in the hunting field, or on the target range and you are ready to shoot safely.
- Insure that the nipple and vent are clean and clear of oil or other obstructions prior to loading.

LOADING AND FIRING

1) Place the rifle on safe, by placing the hammer in the half cock position. Extend the lever downward, fully opening the breech. Carefully insert one bullet of proper caliber into the breech, allowing it to firmly seat into the front of the chamber. Slightly overfill the remaining chamber with black powder or equivalent propellent (Pyrodex) previously prepared with the proper measurer (item USA 196).

   Maximum loads should not exceed 60 grains in .45 caliber or 80 grains in .54 caliber.
   All powder grain weights given are for Swiss n.3 black powder.
   Make sure that the chamber is completly filled with powder to avoid any empty space between powder and ball.
   The chamber should hold approximately 50 to 60 grains of black powder in .45 caliber, and 60 to 80 grains in .54 caliber. Actual powder capacity can vary, depending on bullet type, or configuration.

   Note: a paper cartridge can be inserted in the chamber instead of the bullet and powder method at this time; *to make a paper cartridge, we suggest you consult the specialized manuals for black powder loads.*

2) With the barrel pointed straight down, tap the rifle a few times to allow the powder to settle in the chamber. **If using the paper cartridge method, push the cartridge firmly into the cylinder, slightly compacting the powder and insuring that the paper cartridge you allow to make a complete charge and that there are no empty spaces inside the chamber.** With the barrel still pointed down, carefully close the breech. Keeping the gun horizontal, turn the rifle right or left with the muzzle pointed downrange in a safe direction, so any excess paper and powder will fall away from the top of the breech and onto the ground.

3) With the barrel pointed safely downrange, cap the rifle with musket cap and fully cock the hammer. While pointing at your target, slowly pull on the **REAR** trigger until it sets. While aiming at your target, slowly pull the **FRONT** trigger and your rifle will fire.

4) In the event the rifle does not fire, continue pointing the rifle downrange in a **SAFE DIRECTION** for a period of at least **ONE MINUTES**, or until you are sure that the **CHARGE IS "DEAD"** and the chance of a hangfire has passed. After placing the rifle on safe, remove the musket

cap and verify that the powder fills all the space in the chamber and repeat the shot. If the rifle continues to misfire, unloading may be necessary. See *"UNLOADING PROCEDURE"* below.

5) WARNING: During the loading it may happen that some black powder trickle down into the bottom of the forend in spite the cleaning as mentioned at the point 2b). A periodical control, disassembling the forend is recommended to avoid any black powder cumulous. If powder gets into this area, there is a chance that the flash from the cap communicating with the now accumulated powder at the gas seal, **COULD EXPLODE** causing **DAMAGE TO THE RIFLE** and **INJURY TO THE SHOOTER**.

To disassemble the forend, loosen the screw (part. # 62), or remove the barrel's bands

UNLOADING PROCEDURE

1) We suggest not to open the breech block when the rifle is loaded, but if you have to, make sure to follow the instructions below.

2) With the barrel pointed in a safe direction, place the hammer on safe position. **CAREFULLY** remove the musket cap. After the cap has been removed, point the muzzle toward the ground. Tap the rifle a few times to settle the powder back towards the front of the main chamber. This will allow you to open the breech without pulling powder which would normally settle in the chamber and into the gas seal.

3) With the barrel still pointing down, and after the rifle has been tapped a few times, carefully draw down the slide and open the breech. Turn the rifle upsidedown so the powder will flow down, away from the forend and out of the top of the breech, inside a water filled bowl to avoid that the black powder may get spilled on the ground. **FOREND SHOULD BE UP AND TOP OF THE BREECH SHOULD BE FACING DOWN**. Do not allow powder to trickle down into the bottom of the breech or the forend. Check and clean the parts disassembling the breech block and the forend.

4) Use a wooden dowel or ramrod to push the bullet from the muzzle out of the chamber.

5) Clean and inspect the vent and nipple before reloading. Fire a couple of caps through the unloaded rifle to aid clearing out the nipple and vent, prior to loading.

6) **Warning:** Make sure there is no smoldering paper residue left in chamber BEFORE LOADING AGAIN.

BRASS CASES LOADING

As an alternative to the traditional paper cartridge we offer new brass cases for the .45 caliber (USA 517-451) and for the .54 caliber modern style bullet (USA 517-54A) and for original style bullet (USA 517-54B).
The modern style bullet (USA 524) and the original style bullet (USA 519) have a different shape. The first have a more cylindrical section than the second therefore it catches first with the rifling through the free bore, while the second gets into the rifling having the bottom base section in the free bore. This is the reason of two brass cases for the .54 caliber USA 517-54A shorter, but with a lager diameter for the modern bullet and USA 517-54B longer with a less wide diameter. In

spite the different lengths the inside volume is the same.

1) Our shooting tests have shown good results with Swiss brand black powder no.2 grain size. In the 45 caliber try between 50 and 60 grains and for the larger .54 caliber try between 60 and 80 grains. Note that when using the brass cartridge cases this large amount cannot be used and the .45 cal. will take 47 to 50 grs. and the .54 will take 52 to 55 grs. (depending upon the powder grain size being used as well as the length of bullet being used). Among all the currently available powders the Swiss brand has been found to be somewhat more powerful so if you use another brand you may require more grains of powder. Lower bullet velocity sometimes produces better accuracy so full loads may not always be required or desirable. Try various powder brands and loads to determine what your rifle likes best.

2) To prevent powder grains falling through the flash hole of the case, place a small piece of “cigarette” paper inside the case and covering the flash hole.

3) Pour in the powder charge so that the powder level is slightly above the bullet seating shoulder and carefully press in the lubricated bullet so it is fully seated against the shoulder in the brass case and also in full contact with the black powder.**THERE MUST NEVER BE ANY AIR SPACE BETWEEN THE POWDER AND THE BASE OF THE BULLET** as dangerous pressures can occur if any air space exists. For this reason the powder must always be compressed at least a small amount.

4) After loading the cartridge case into your rifle, punch a small hole through the paper to allow the primer flash to reach the powder effectively. Make sure that any small powder quantity does not trickle down the breech block, in case wipe it away.

To make the bullet for our brass cases, we offer the steel bullet block which can be equipped with wooden handles and the already made bullets packed in 50 units. The same bullets can be used to make the paper cartridges, as originally intended.

Caliber	**Brass case Our code**		**Bullet mould Our code**	**50 bullets box Our code**
		Bullet design / Weight		
.45	USA 517-451	USA 319-458	USA 519-458	Modern design / 380 grs
.54	USA 517-54A	USA 317-541	USA 524-541	Modern design / 525 grs
.54	USA 517-54B	USA 319-541	USA 519-541	Original design / 530 grs